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Defense of Abinadi the Prophet

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Abstract: A dramatic rendition of Abinadi's prophetic message to King Noah.

she at once recollected what her morning's duty was, and with much hunting and searching, under boxes and in drawers, behind wood and beneath the cupboard, she gathered sufficient of the Sunday apparel of the two children to put them in shape for the appearance at the services.

And the cleaning process was done right in the center of the sitting room. It was a sort of pleasure to sit there in all that spic and span wonder and be able to lay the white apron down on the floor without soiling it irrevocably. Likewise, it seemed rather good to be able to put the comb down on the center table and not lose it again in a second in the miscellaneous heap piled upon the handy receptacle. So, as soon as mother and children were ready, the little woman, who knew herself to be ridiculously late, felt she had small time to remedy the disorder she had created in the sitting room, so she hastily gathered up the whole mass of night clothes, comb, brushes, towels, her own soiled wrapper and other clothes, and hastily dropping them inside the bedroom door, she went away thinking what a good soul her new sister-in-law was, in spite of her rather quick speech and manner. She was glad as she went along that she had tucked away in her own room the evidence of her own and the babies toilette, for she instinctively dreaded the glance of those clean, quick, brown eyes belonging to her sister-in-law. If she had noticed the hairs upon

the tablecloth, the dirt upon the floor, shaken from Robbie's shoes, the fine comb dropped under the table, the big splash of hair grease upon the carpet and the blacking brush on the chair cushion, she would not have rested quite so content perhaps. But I don't know, as to that, for the little mother didn't get old worrying about useless things. And she was so good-natured. You couldn't help loving her; no one could.

DEFENSE OF ABINADI THE PROPHET.

[THIS dialogue would have been printed some months ago, but that I wished to put it, with the consent of the author, into active use in our ward Sunday School before publishing. This has as yet been impossible, and therefore I now put it before the readers of the JOURNAL, urging them to try it, and get it up as well as their circumstances will admit. There is another dialogue which has also been waiting for the same purpose, and perhaps shortly I will give you that one. If they are useful to you just write a word to the Editor.]

Believing that from the Book of Mormon dialogues (whether read or acted according to instructions) will make a lasting impression, and leave a divine influence upon a congregation of the young gathered for instruction. I have selected the following trial of the martyr Abinadi, by the wicked King Noah and his corrupt priests. Dedicating it to the service of the Lord, I give the exact words as nearly as possible. The stage should be arranged as follows:

CAST OF CHARACTER AND DRESS:

KING NOAH [one with forcible voice, dressed in a yellow robe to his feet, on which are slip-

pers. A crown on his head, ornamented with bright metals of tin or gilt paper.]

ALL THE PRIESTS, [five in number dressed in white under robe, and a blue frock nearly down to knees, a red sash around the waist, a white cap on head, with bow of blue over left ear.]

SERVANTS, [white frock, bare-headed guards, blue frock, with red caps, belt sword, dressed in plain gray or brown frock to knees, a cap of black.]

It is believed that if this dialogue is acted in our settlements it will cause hundreds to read the Book of Mormon that otherwise would not.

* SCENE FIRST.

[At the back and in the center of stage a small raised platform, on it an arm chair, with a red cloth covering it and platform. On this sits King Noah, an attendant fanning him. Five chairs, covered with red cloth are standing at the left and facing the throne.]

[Enter five priests and two guards, leading Abinadi, with feet chained together just far enough apart, so he can walk slowly. Exit guards. Priests take seats in chairs, after saluting the King with a low bow, and they say in concert], "O king, live forever." [Abinadi standing to the right near where they entered.]

FIRST PRIEST [rising]: O king, behold we have brought a man before thee, who has prophesied evil concerning thy people, and saith that God will destroy them [sits down.]

SECOND PRIEST [rising]: O king, and he also prophesied evil concerning thy life, and saith that thy life shall be as a garment in a furnace of fire [sits down].

THIRD PRIEST [rising]: O king, and again he saith that thou shalt be as a stalk, even as a dry stalk of the field, which is run over by the beasts and trodden under foot" [sits down].

FOURTH PRIEST [rising]: O king, and again he saith thou shalt be as the blossom of the thistle, which when it is fully ripe, if the wind bloweth, it is driven forth upon the face of the land, and he pretendeth the Lord hath spoken it. And he saith all this shall come upon thee, except thou repent; and this because of thine iniquities [sits down].

[FIFTH PRIEST is Alma, who does not accuse Abinadi.]

FIRST PRIEST [rising]: And now, O king, what great evil hast thou done, or what great sins have thy people committed, that we should be condemned of God, or judged of this man [sits down].

SECOND PRIEST [rising]: And now, O king, behold we are guiltless, and thou, O king, hast not sinned; therefore this man has lied concerning you, and he has prophesied in vain. And behold we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies; yea, and thou hast prospered in the land, and thou shalt also prosper [sits down].

THIRD PRIEST [rises excitedly, crosses stage to Abinadi, shaking his fist at him and addressing the

king]: O king, behold here is the man; we deliver him into thy hands; thou mayest do with him as seemeth thee good [the other priests arise excitedly and surround Abinadi, dragging him to the king, excepting Alma who keeps his seat.]

KING NOAH [stretching out his hand]: Away with this man, cast him into prison. Then gather ye together in the council chamber, that we may consider what is best to do with him. [Two guards enter. Exit right, dragging Abinadi. Alma and other priests. Exit left. Curtain drops.]

SECOND SCENE.

Change covering of throne, also of chairs. Bring in a table. Place at right of throne, Alma sitting at table with pencil and paper as clerk. Several books are on the table, among them the Book of Mormon. A vacant chair, without cover, on opposite side of table for Abinadi. King Noah is seated on throne, the other four priests seated on left. Two guards standing on right, caps in hand as curtain rises.

KING NOAH: What shall we do with this prophet, that prophesies evil concerning us?

FOURTH PRIEST [rises]: O, king, send and bring him hither that we may question him [sits down].

KING [to guards]: Bring Abinadi here at once. [Exit guards right entrance].

[Enter guards leading Abinadi, feet chained but hands loose. They seat him in the vacant chair

at the table. They stand close by.]

FIRST PRIEST [rises] Ye prophet, what meaneth the words which are written, and which have been taught by our fathers? [Goes to table, takes Book of Mormon; reads 12th chapter, of Mosiah 21st to 24th verses; lays it down, takes seat].

ABINADI [sitting]: Are you priests, and pretend to teach this people, and to understand the spirit of prophesying, and yet desire to know of me what these things mean? I say unto you, Woe be unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord. For if ye understand these things, ye have not taught them; therefore ye have perverted the ways of the Lord. Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding; therefore, ye have not been wise: therefore, what teach ye this people?"

ALL THE PRIESTS [except Alma]: We teach the law of Moses.

ABINADI: If ye teach the law of Moses, why do ye not keep it? Why do ye set your hearts upon riches? Why do ye commit whoredoms and spend your strength with harlots; yea, and cause this people to commit sin, that the Lord has cause to send me to prophesy against this people: yea, even a great evil against this people? Know ye not that I speak the truth? Yea, ye know I speak the truth, and you ought to tremble before God. And it shall come to pass that ye shall be smitten for your iniquities; for ye have said that ye teach the law of Moses. And

what know ye concerning the law of Moses? Doth salvation come by the law of Moses? What say ye?

ALL PRIESTS AT ONCE [except Alma]: Yea, salvation doth come by the law of Moses.

ABINADI: I know if ye keep the commandments of God ye shall be saved; yea, if ye keep the commandments which the Lord delivered unto Moses in the Mount of Sinai, saying: "I am the Lord thy God, who hast brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything in heaven above, or things which are in the earth beneath. Have ye done all this? I say unto you, nay, ye have not. And have ye taught this people that they should do all these things? I say unto you, nay, ye have not.

KING [arising in anger, motions to the priests with a sweep of his hand]: Away with this fellow, and slay him, for what have we to do with him, for he is mad.

All the priests arise [except Alma, who was writing all the time], and with the guard rush at Abinadi: Let him be burned with fire.

ABINADI [gets up, raises his right hand]: Touch me not, for God shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me. [All draw back in fright.] For I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver; neither

have I told you that which ye requested that I should tell; therefore, God will not suffer that I should be destroyed at this time. But I must fulfill the commandments wherewith God hath commanded me, and because I have told you the truth ye are angry with me. And, again, because I have spoken the word of God, ye have judged me that I am mad. Ye see that ye have no power to slay me, therefore I finish my message; yea, and I perceive that it cuts you to your hearts, because I tell you the truth concerning your iniquities. But I finish my message, and then it mattereth not whither I go, if it so be that I am saved. And now I read unto you the remainder of the commandments of God, for I perceive they are not written in your hearts. I perceive that ye have studied and taught iniquity the most part of your lives."

[King, priests and guards stand as if amazed.]

ABINADI [standing] picks up Book of Mormon. Reads 13 chapter Book Mosiah, beginning at 12 verse to 24 verse. [Read forcibly.]

KING [stretching out his hand, and with a commanding voice]: Ye priests and guards, I command you to take this fellow and put him to death.

ALMA [arises]: O, king, be not angry with Abinadi, for God hath sent him to call upon us to repent of our sins; for behold we are guilty of all the iniquities of which he hath spoken, and my soul mourneth within me because of

them, for what will befall this people except we repent. O let us not shed the innocent blood of this prophet of God, for he is not to blame. He hath only spoken the words the Lord commanded him, and we are guilty. Be not wroth at him, but let him go in peace. I plead of you to have mercy.

KING [rises, stamping his feet, and with rage says to the guards]: Put this priest Alma out of the council chamber, for he is an enemy also.

[Guards seize Alma and thrusts him out at left entrance. All priests rise in confusion].

KING [to guards]: Call my servants immediately. [King sits down.] Exit one guard at right. Re-enters with two servants.]

KING [to servants]: Follow Alma and slay him. Be quick, slaves, before he prophesy against me also. [Exit servants at left in haste, drawing their swords].

KING [to guards]: Surround Abinadi and bind him more securely hand and foot, and cast him into prison.

[Guards bind him and drag him off to right. Curtain falls.]

THIRD SCENE.

No change of properties. Table placed close to and in front of the throne. King on the throne. The four priests sitting at left of stage.

KING [to priests]: Abinadi has been in prison three days now. Tell the guards to bring him hither, that peradventure he will

recall his words concerning us. Did the servants slay Alma?

FIRST PRIEST [rising]: O, king, they did not; he has hid himself so they could not find him. [Crosses to right. Calls]: Ye guards, the king wishes Abinadi brought before him immediately. [Returns to seat].

[Enter guards bringing Abinadi bound hand and foot. He stands at the table half facing the King.]

KING: Abinadi we have found an accusation against thee and thou art worthy of death. For thou hast said that God himself should come down among the children of men, and now for this cause thou shalt be put to death unless thou wilt recall all the words which thou hast spoken evil concerning me and my people.

ABINADI: I say unto you, I will not recall the words which I have spoken unto you concerning this people, for they are true, and that ye may know of their surety, I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands. Yea, and I will suffer even until death, and will not recall my words, and they shall stand as a testimony against you. And if ye slay me, ye will shed innocent blood, and this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day.

KING [to priests]: Would we not better let him go free?

PRIESTS [all together]: O, king, he has reviled the King, and defied thy power. He is worthy of death.

KING: Away with him, slay him, burn him with fire.

[The guards and priests rush for Abinadi, and drag him to the right as the curtain falls.]

[Let some one then step in front of the curtain and read verse 13 to the end of chapter 17. Then exhort the young to read from there on, and see the fulfillment of Abinadi's words.]

Kenn.

[I would suggest as another ending to this dialogue that the scene [or curtain] should part at the back and disclose Abinadi bound to a stake, piled high with sticks of wood, already on fire. This fire, of course, would be simply the red fire used on the stage. Abinadi could deliver the prophecy concerning the future death of the Lamanites who were taken captives, and the whole scene could close with the Indians dancing and yelling around the prophet, who could simulate great agony. The effect would be much greater if it could be thus managed. Ed.]

OUR TEMPLE.

TO THE WORKERS THEREIN.

Like shadowy rock in dreary desert lands,
To Saints of God our towering temple stands;
Its spires pointing to that home on high,
Where tired feet will rest them by and by.

And as I ponder in the sacred walls,
From out the vanished past fond memory calls;
I see the favored spot marked out by Brigham's
hand,
While wondering round him stand his little
band.

Houseless and homeless exiles weak and worn,
Of all but faith in God had they been shorn,
But when he said a Temple here shall rise,
Methinks his voice was echoed in the skies.

Most willing hands have reared this altar high,
Whose name and fame on earth can never die:
From aged sire down to little child,
For this have daily hoped and prayed and
toiled.

I see the patient oxen trudge along,
And hear the teamster's cheerful voice in song,
As on the journey o'er the dusty road,
With just one granite stone—that one a load.

But all too slow this way, a swifter power,
Must lend its might to build these walls and
towers,
And soon the iron horse with ready will,
Speeds o'er the plain and climbs the long steep
hill.

And thus the work rolled on from year to year,
While anxious hearts were watching far and
near;
Oh could our dim eyes pierce life's mystic veil,
Beyond our loved ones join this hour to hail.

Dear hands are reaching to clasp ours again,
And voices to mingle in a glad refrain;
We feel in this Temple the "gates are ajar,"
That soon dawn's the rising of Bethlehem's
star.

For "the Spirit of God like a fire is burning,"
The hearts of the children to parents are turn-
ing,
The work of redemption rolls on like a wave,
From the bondage of sin the ransomed to save.
S. E. R.

GIRLHOOD.

This is the happy, innocent time
lying in the quiet, sequestered
vale of a woman's life, between
the two great epochs—birth and
marriage.

It immediately follows noisy,
romping children, when sex is not
so strictly defined.

With girlhood comes a quiet, a
reserve, a modesty not before ex-
perienced, but so delicate that it
has been aptly compared to a
modest violet, beautiful of color
and rich of perfume, yet almost